The Old Executive Office Building
A Victorian Masterpiece

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THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION
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Acknowledgements

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Cover: Aerial view of the north and west wings of the State, War, and Navy Building, now known as the Old Executive Office Building (OEOB). The White House is visible to the left. White House.

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Foreword

The nation's capital is graced by scores of magnificent monuments and imposing official structures, among them the Lincoln, Jefferson, and Washington Memorials, the White House and the Capitol Building. These structures attract thousands of visitors each year for two reasons. First, they are impressive architectural achievements. Second, they have great historical significance; they either commemorate great individuals or events.

With this two-fold standard in mind, it is time that we accord the Old Executive Office Building, formerly the State, War, and Navy Building, a place in the front rank of American historical monuments. The OEOB, the acronym by which the Old Executive Office Building is known, is almost one hundred years old and is an architectural masterpiece. It is one of the nation's finest examples of the French Second Empire style, and stands in stark contrast to the Neo-Classical architectural style that characterizes the majority of government buildings. The singular design of the building makes the OEOB an artistic resource that the nation should value and preserve.

Furthermore, the OEOB is a great national historic resource because it housed many of America's great statesmen at one point or another in their public careers. Twenty-five Secretaries of State served in the OEOB, including James G. Blaine, John Sherman, John Hay, Elihu Root, William Jennings Bryan, Charles Evans Hughes, Cordell Hull, James Byrnes, and George C. Marshall. Twenty-one Secretaries of War had offices in the building, including Robert Todd Lincoln, Elihu Root, and Henry Stimson, as did fifteen Secretaries of the Navy, including Johnathan Davis Long, Charles J. Bonaparte, Truman Newberry, and Josephus Daniels. Five Presidents worked in the OEOB: Theodore Roosevelt as Assistant Secretary of the Navy from 1897 to 1898 (he cabled Commodore George Dewey from his office in the OEOB, alerting him of the action that ended in the great naval victory in Manila Bay); William Howard Taft as Secretary of War from 1904 to 1908 (he received word by telephone in his OEOB suite that the Republican convention had nominated him for the presidency); Franklin D. Roosevelt as Assistant Secretary of the Navy from 1913 to 1918; Dwight D. Eisenhower as Military Aide to General Douglas MacArthur in 1933; and Lyndon Baines Johnson as Vice President from 1961 to 1963. All of the modern Vice Presidents from Lyndon Johnson to George Bush have had offices in the OEOB as well.

The OEOB has also been the host for a number of important historical events. In 1898 Secretary of State John Hay handed the Spanish Ambassador his passport and credentials in Room 208; this signified our declaration of war against Spain. Cordell Hull summoned Japanese envoys Nomura and Korusu to the same room on December 7, 1941, and confronted them with the newly arrived evidence of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Over 1,000 treaties were signed in the building while the State Department occupied it. The protocol of the treaty ending the Spanish-American War was drafted and signed here in 1898 by the French Ambassador on behalf of Spain. John Hay signed a series of treaties with Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Great Britain, Colombia, and Panama that provided for the building of the Panama Canal. The United Nations Declaration of January 1, 1942, was drafted here and, after having been signed by Roosevelt, Churchill, Litvinov, and Soong, was signed in Assistant Secretary of State Adolph Berle's office by representatives of the twenty-two other nations. The Bretton Woods Fund and Bank Agreements establishing the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction were signed in the Indian Treaty Room (Room 474) by Secretary of the Treasury Fred R. Vinson in 1945.

Surely, few buildings in Washington have hosted occupants and witnessed events of such an order. It is, above all, this legacy of great statesmen who have performed great deeds in its confines which makes the OEOB an important national resource.

The preservation of the OEOB and an awareness of its value as an historical site is important for the American public and especially for those who labor in its offices today and who will do so in the future. To work in offices that have housed such eminent figures as John Hay, Charles Evans Hughes, Theodore Roosevelt, and Dwight Eisenhower should serve as an inspiration to those who work hard and honorably on the nation's behalf. It should also remind those who occupy the building that the presidency comprises far more than a single individual elected every four years ; the presidency is, in fact, a permanent institution with a long and noble history. When each new administration moves into offices that have been occupied by dozens of past administrations stretching back over almost a century, those individuals who work in the OEOB should be reminded of its enduring historical and architectural significance. The OEOB stands as a reminder to the public and to each new administration that America is governed not by a disconnected series of presidents, but by the enduring presidency.

It is for these reasons that this administration is making a special effort to ensure that the Old Executive Office Building is preserved and that its magnificence is well maintained. Publications such as this one will contribute to a better understanding of the building's legacy and a greater appreciation of its architectural quality.

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When the Old Executive Office Building (OEOB) was completed on January 31, 1888, after seventeen years of construction, it was the largest office building in the nation's capital and among the largest in the world (Figure 1)[1]. Originally known as the State, War, and Navy Building, its two miles of corridors and 553 rooms then housed three of our most influential government departments. Over the years, many of America's most important public servants, Presidents and Vice Presidents included, have worked within this building shaping our foreign and domestic policy, rendering it witness to countless events of great national and international consequence (Figure 2).

Despite its historical significance, however, the OEOB has always been an anomaly in Federal Washington. The gray granite mass designed in the French Second Empire style by government architect Alfred B. Mullett differs strikingly from Washington's chaste Neo-Classical government buildings and is especially conspicuous in contrast with its immediate neighbors, the Georgian style White House and the Treasury Building designed in the Greek Revival style. The OEOB has always been a controversial

Figure 1: The south and east wings, as seen from the White House grounds ca. 1900. With the exception of the removal of the window awnings (one is visible on the second floor of the south wing) and the replacement of the original angular lanterns with round globes, the exterior of the building remains as it was at the turn of the century. Library of Congress.

Figure 2: The north wing facing Pennsylvania Avenue decorated for a holiday, probably the 4th of July, ca. 1890. The OEOB was open to the public at this time and a popular stop for tourists visiting Washington.

Library of Congress

structure. Mullett's assertive design received both lavish praise and harsh criticism, even while the first of the five wings of the building was still under construction. Its admirers have claimed that it is "altogether one of the finest buildings, if not the finest building in the world"[2] and "an almost perfect specimen of architecture,"[3] while its detractors have berated it for its "coarseness and recklessness"[4] and found it "distressing in its small windows, awkward mansard roof, and coarse, meaningless details."[5] As the tides of architectural taste have ebbed and flowed, the OEOB has withstood recurrent proposals to convert it to a classical temple similar to the Treasury Building, survived several plans for its demolition, and has undergone the staggered departures of the three government agencies for which it was originally built. Surprisingly enough, however, the exterior of the building has remained virtually unaltered for almost a century. Today the building houses members of the President's staff, the offices of the Vice President and a number of high-level executive departments, among them the Office of Management and Budget, the National Security Council, and the Council of Economic Advisors. Despite its precarious history, the OEOB is now recognized as one of the great monuments of nineteenth-century American architecture and is treasured as a romantic link to our nation's past, a fortunate shift in perception that will ensure forever the building's survival as both an historic monument and an architectural masterpiece.

Mullett's OEOB belongs to a post Civil War architectural interlude during which the severe Neo-Classical styles previously used for official buildings in America were briefly challenged by new and more picturesque design modes. The first government buildings erected in Washington in the 1790s, including the White House and the early Treasury and War Department buildings, were designed in the popular Georgian and Federal styles and constructed of light-colored stone or brick and ornamented with classical detail. Even the Capitol, the preeminent symbol of American democracy, was modeled after the great Roman Pantheon in a similar effort to evoke notions of the government's authority and permanence. These buildings were followed in the early nineteenth century by the more grandly scaled Treasury Department and Patent Office buildings in the Greek Revival style. Both were designed with these same symbolic intentions in mind as the government sought to establish its powerful presence as the hub of democracy and freedom in Washington, in the nation and, indeed, throughout the world.

The earliest government-sponsored building to diverge from this classical fold was the Smithsonian Institution, designed in 1849 by New York architect James Renwick. "The Castle," as it is known today, was a pioneering essay in the medievally-inspired Early Romanesque Revival style and, as such, was extremely influential among contemporary architects. After the Civil War, the trend away from classicism gained momentum and several prominent buildings were erected in various new design modes, including the French-inspired Second Empire style. Of particular interest was the Agriculture Department Building, designed by Washington architect Adolph Cluss, that stood on the south side of the Mall near the Smithsonian Institution from 1868 until its demolition in 1930. Among other noteworthy nineteenth-century buildings that departed from the Neo-Classical norm were two additional structures along the southern edge of the Mall -- the Romanesque Revival style Army Medical Museum, also by Cluss and demolished in 1969, and the National Museum, now known as the Arts and Industries Building of the Smithsonian Institution. Under construction elsewhere in Washington were the Italian Renaissance style Pension Building and the Romanesque Revival style Post Office, both of which marked significant departures from standard government-sponsored construction with their adventurous styles, dimensions, and locations within the city plan. Even among these structures, however, the OEOB stands out as the major post Civil War building project in Washington, its size and cost overshadowing that of all other structures of the period. An aggressive stylistic challenge to its predecessors, and to its contemporaries as well, the OEOB stands today as Washington's most outstanding testimonial to the caprice of the Victorian era in America.

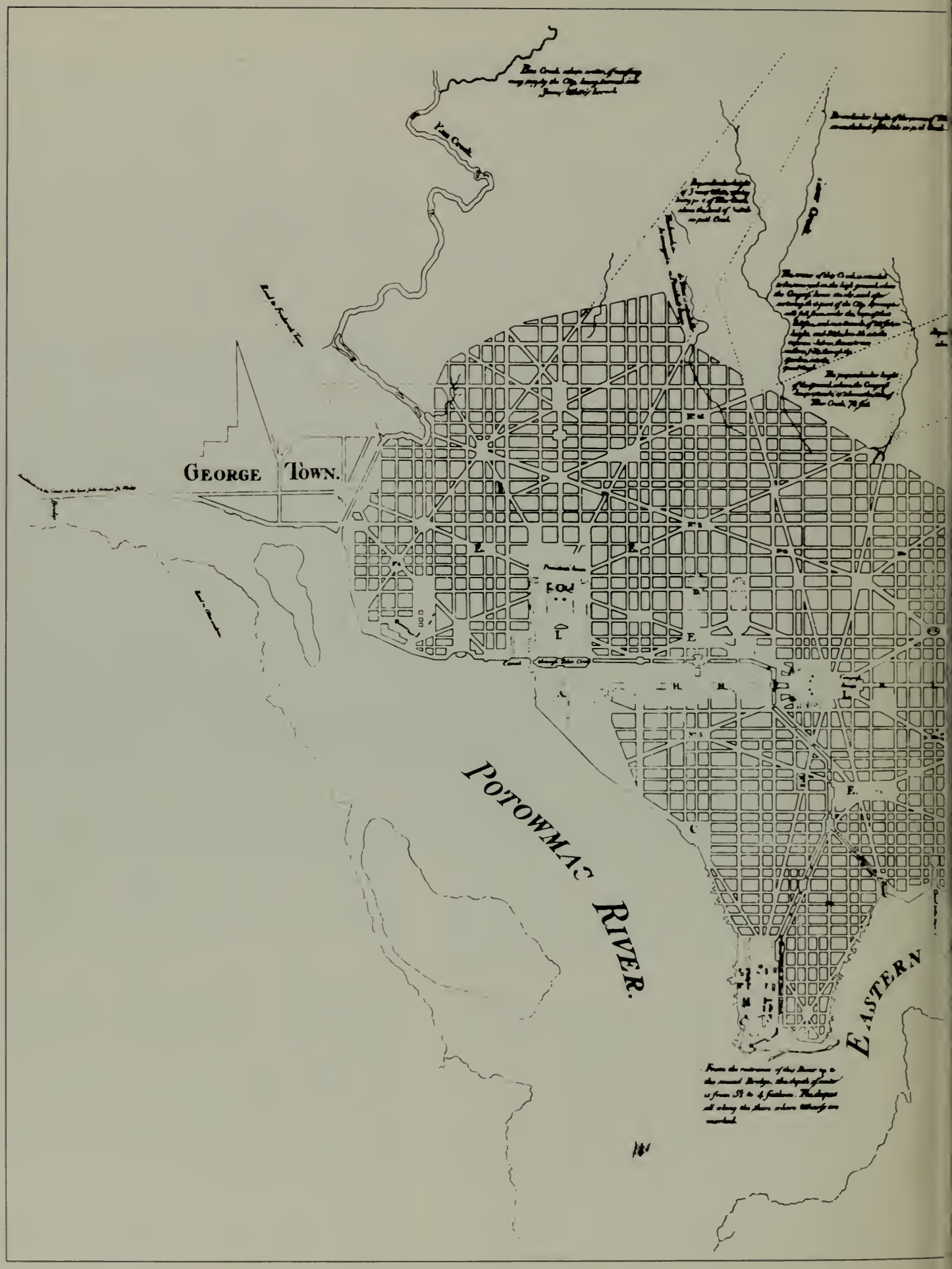
Washington's First Executive Offices

The history of the OEOB, its planning, site, and construction reflect the growth and development of the city of Washington as a whole and more specifically the evolution of the area around the White House (Figure 3)[6].

Figure 3: A sketch of the White House and the four executive office buildings designed by George Hadfield and James Hoban, executed in 1820 by Baroness Hyde de Neuville, wife of the French Minister. To the left of the White House are the State Department (front) and Treasury (rear), and to the right the first War Department (rear), which later became the Navy Department. The second War Department (front) faced Pennsylvania Avenue. Stokes Collection, New York Public Library.

The District of Columbia had been officially designated the site for the federal capital by the Residence Act of 1790, which stipulated that the city be laid out and necessary government buildings constructed within ten years. The year after the passage of the Residence Act, French engineer Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant was selected to be the designer of the federal city and created a plan based upon French Baroque precedents such as Versailles, the Garden of the Tuileries, and others that were available to him through published maps and plans.[7] He envisioned two major focal points for the city that would coincide with the two principal government buildings -- the Capitol and the President's House -- and devised a series of expansive axial boulevards emanating from these central nodes that were to be punctuated by plazas and squares. A grid pattern of secondary streets was laid across the Baroque boulevards and a wide mall was to run east to west from the Capitol to the Potomac River. Finally, an uninterrupted vista was to form a major thoroughfare connecting the Capitol and President's House, later named Pennsylvania Avenue (Figure 4).

When construction of the White House began in 1792, following a design competition held by the city commissioners, plans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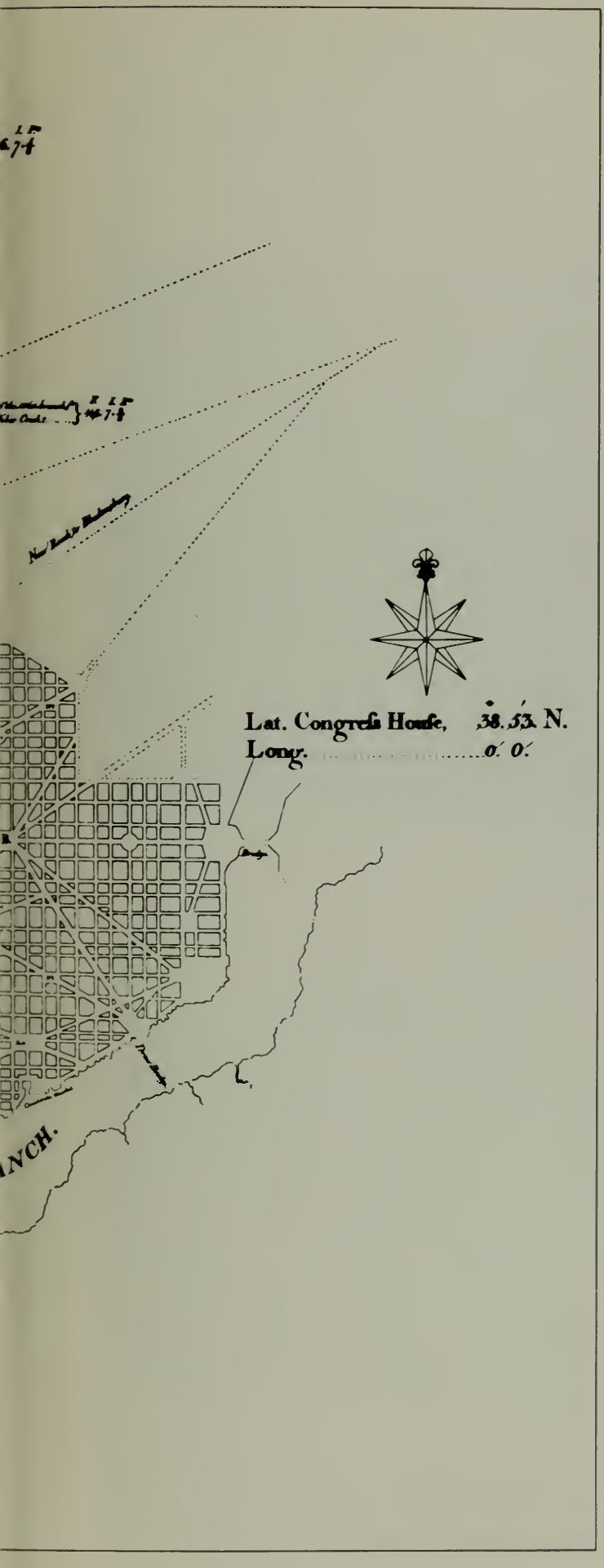


for the executive offices had not yet been made. In 1796 at George Washington's request, sites flanking the White House were chosen for the new offices of the four executive departments: Treasury, State, War, and Navy. Construction did not get under way immediately, however, since all available labor was involved in the completion of the Capitol. Two years later, as construction was about to begin on the first two executive office buildings, President John Adams announced his intention to build them near the Capitol, much to Washington's dismay. Washington pleaded on behalf of his original idea, writing to Adams that "the daily intercourse which the Secretaries of the Departments must have, with the President, would render a distant situation (the Capitol area) extremely inconvenient to them."[8] Adams finally acquiesced to the White House sites and, later on in 1798, the Treasury Building was begun just to the east of the White House. The following year, construction commenced on the Treasury's identical counterpart to the west of the mansion, the War Department. Both of these simple two-and-one-half story brick buildings were designed by English-trained architect George Hadfield in the restrained manner typical of the Georgian period. The thirty-four room Treasury Building was occupied in mid-1800 and the War Department opened shortly thereafter, sharing its building with the departments of State and Navy.

On August 24, 1814, during the War of 1812, the White House and the two executive office buildings were partially destroyed by fires set by the occupying British forces. White House architect James Hoban rebuilt the executive offices, changing some of the exterior architectural details and readying them for occupancy by 1816. Both were designed in the Federal style and displayed such typical Federal forms as round-arched entrances with elegant leaded fanlights, simple stone window lintels and sills, horizontal stringcourses of light stone, and hip roofs punctuated by dormer windows.

Only two years later, a shortage of office space forced Congress to approve the construction of two additional executive office

Figure 4: "Plan of the City Intended for the Permanent Seat of the Government of the United States", by Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, 1791.

National Archives and Records Service

buildings to be located to the north of the original pair fronting onto Pennsylvania Avenue -- the State Department to the east and the War Department to the west, with the Navy Department taking over the original War Department Building southwest of the White House (Figures 3 and 5). These structures, completed in 1820, were similiar in size and design to the original pair but featured the addition of stone Ionic-columned porticos to their northern facades.

Figure 5: The north facade of the old State Department building, designed by James Hoban and completed in 1820. This photograph was taken shortly before the building was demolished in 1866 to make way for the north wing of the new Treasury Building by Robert Mills. Library of Congress.

Because of the rapid growth of the United States in size, population, wealth, and power and the accompanying expansion of the federal bureaucracy, the four small executive buildings soon proved inadequate in meeting their departments' needs. Furthermore, none of these early buildings were fireproof, and the danger of fire was ever-present. In 1800 fires destroyed records in the first War and Treasury Buildings, later both buildings were burned during the War of 1812, and in 1833, yet another fire destroyed the reconstructed Treasury Building. The construction of new offices that would accommodate departmental personnel while safeguarding government records therefore became a high priority.

In 1836 the government finally took steps to remedy both problems. Construction was begun on a new Treasury, a monumental Greek Revival structure designed by Robert Mills, architect of the Patent Office and later of the Washington Monument. Mills's design called for a T-shaped building with open terraces facing the White House to be constructed of as little combustible material as possible.[9] After the original portion of the Treasury was completed in 1842, wings were added on the north, west, and south ends of the building, all of which faithfully copied the style of the original. In order to complete the Treasury, the old State Department Building had to be demolished in 1866. The Treasury Building, which would later prove to play a significant role in the design of the OEOB, was completed three years later and exists today as an imposing four-story rectangle with two interior courts divided by a central wing.

During and after this construction, plans were contemplated for rebuilding or extending the executive buildings situated to the west of the White House. Mills developed several schemes for connecting and reconstructing the War and Navy buildings,[10] but by 1845 it was decided that the solution to office expansion would be found only in new construction. A competition was held that year seeking designs for a new structure

to replace Old War and Old Navy rather than connect the existing buildings. Many of America's leading architects entered the competition and, not surprisingly, all submitted designs in the Greek Revival style.[11] The outbreak of the Mexican War, however, postponed all building plans; instead, the government rented additional office space and its executive branches were thus scattered in buildings throughout Washington.

With the cessation of hostilities with Mexico came the revival of the idea for a new executive office building. Thomas Ustick Walter, a prominent Philadelphian who would later design the existing Capitol dome and engineer its complex construction, was the proposed architect. In 1852 Walter drew plans for a large rectangular building that would complement those of the Treasury. These plans were important to the history of the OEOB as they initially established the concept of a pair of monumental buildings designed with large interior courts framing the White House. With the outbreak of the Civil War, Walter's plans for the new executive offices were cancelled, but the government did undertake a hasty building campaign to enlarge the War and Navy buildings, replacing their hip roofs with one-and-one-half story additions (Figure 6). The Navy Building was also enlarged with the addition of a rear extension.

Figure 6: The south and east facades of the old War Department building, ca. 1872. At the time this photograph was taken, construction had begun on the foundations of the east wing of the OEOB, visible in the foreground. The third and attic stories were added during the Civil War to temporarily offset crowded office conditions. Library of Congress.

The inadequacies of the old executive office buildings were aggravated by an increase in personnel and departmental activity during the Civil War. This, coupled with the displacement of the State Department from its Pennsylvania Avenue quarters just after the war's end, made the construction of a new executive office building imperative. On December 14, 1869, Congress appointed a commission to find an appropriate site for a new State Department Building and to procure designs and cost estimates for its construction. The commission's suggestions were ultimately rejected by Congress, and a congressional committee was subsequently established to investigate potential sites. Secretary of State Hamilton Fish personally escorted the members of this committee to all of the possible building sites within the city, including the area west of the White House on which the old War and Navy buildings stood. Meanwhile, General William T. Sherman pressured the government for a combined State, War, and Navy Building, arguing that the individual departments would benefit from being housed in the same facility. Congress finally decided upon the site west of the White House, and plans for the new building were submitted by Alfred Mullett, Supervising Architect of the Treasury. On March 3, 1871, Congress officially authorized the construction of a new building to house the Departments of State, War, and Navy, thereby committing itself to the construction of a new building and ending over thirty years of controversy.

An initial allocation of $500,000 was included in this first authorization, only the beginning of successive building appropriations which eventually totaled $10,124,500.[12] The legislation specified only that the new building was to be "similar in ground plan and dimensions to the Treasury Building,"[13] not that it resemble the Treasury in style, as later critics would assert as the premise for their attacks on the building. As written, the act could only have been meant to refer to Mullett's design which had been formulated a year earlier and was, indeed, almost identical in ground plan to the Treasury.

Hamilton Fish, Alfred Mullett, and the French Second Empire Style

The 1871 act designated Secretary of State Hamilton Fish (1808-1893) in charge of construction. Fish was an illustrious member of a New York family long prominent in American politics. Educated at Columbia College and admitted to the bar in 1830, he was elected to Congress in 1842, to the post of lieutenant governor of New York in 1844 and, in the following year, to a two-year term as governor. He then served as a United States Senator from 1851 to 1857. After the dissolution of the Whig Party, Fish joined the Republicans and worked for the election of Abraham Lincoln, acting as a confidant of the President during the Civil War. After the war, although he had officially retired, Fish reluctantly accepted the post of Secretary of State under President Grant, a long-time friend and political ally.

Fish was responsible for awarding the commission for the new State, War, and Navy Building to Mullett. Alfred Bult Mullett (1834-1890), a native of England, immigrated to America with his family in 1845 and settled first in Glendale, Ohio, near Cincinnati (Figure 7). Although the extent of his early architectural training remains a subject of speculation, it has been suggested that he was apprenticed to an architect at an early age.[14] Whatever his training may have been, Mullett entered the Cincinnati office of architect Isaiah Rogers in 1857, a step which was to have a profound effect on the course of his career. In 1861 Rogers closed his Ohio practice and moved to Washington, having been appointed Supervising Architect of the Treasury. Shortly thereafter, early in the Civil War, Mullett enlisted in the Army and left Ohio, but by the time he reached Washington his services were no longer required. Nevertheless, he remained in Washington and in 1863, no doubt at the instigation of Isaiah Rogers, was appointed as a clerk in the Treasury Department's Bureau of Construction. Mullett was rapidly promoted to Assistant Supervising Architect and, a year after Rogers resigned in September of 1865, took over his mentor's position as Supervising Architect of the Treasury.

Figure 7: Alfred Bult Mullett (1834-1890), architect of the Old Executive Office Building.

Columbia Historical Society

The responsibilities of the Supervising Architect's post were endless. The young Mullett was charged with overseeing the design and construction of all of the government's major building projects, including post offices, custom houses, mints, subtreasuries, and federal courthouses throughout the country. As the United States grew in size and population after the Civil War, the demand for new federal buildings increased dramatically, and so did the responsibilities of Mullett's position. During his eight-year tenure as Supervising Architect, he was to oversee the design of approximately forty buildings in cities ranging from Portland, Maine, to Astoria, Oregon.

Mullett's first government project was for the Branch Mint in Carson City, Nevada, a massive stone building designed in the Italianate style. This was soon followed by the Courthouse and Post Office in Spring-

field, Illinois. It was with the design for this simple three-story stone building that Mullett introduced the mansard roof, a hallmark of the French Second Empire style and a form that was to characterize the majority of his government buildings. During his years as Supervising Architect, he designed seven great urban complexes located in Boston, New York City, Chicago, St. Louis, Hartford, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati (Figures 8 and 9). All of these buildings were on an enormous scale, but none compared in size to the State, War, and Navy Building. Its importance to Mullett's career is further enhanced by the fact that, of his seven major works, the St. Louis Courthouse and Post Office is the only other survivor of the twentieth century's campaign against Victorian architecture.

The State, War, and Navy project did not fall under the jurisdiction of the Treasury Department, but Mullett was persuaded to undertake its design by Hamilton Fish, whom he probably first met while serving on the commission to choose a site for the building in 1870. Mullett had declined Fish's initial offer, but Fish persisted; he had discovered the French Second Empire style while visiting Europe prior to the Civil War and undoubtedly had come to share Mullett's enthusiasm for the cosmopolitan elegance of this new architectural mode. Perhaps influential as well in Fish's decision to seek his services was Mullett's Courthouse and Post Office then under construction in New York City, a huge French Second Empire style complex with tier upon tier of superimposed columns and pilasters, round-arched windows, and a bulbous mansard roof (Figure 9).

Almost all of the important buildings designed under Mullett's direction were variations of the French Second Empire style, which he perfected in his 1868-1869 designs for the Treasury Department's buildings in Boston and New York. Two essential characteristics of the French Second Empire style, as it was interpreted by American architects, are a steeply pitched mansard roof and the utilization of the pavilion motif. As a component of this style, the mansard emphasizes the building's roof line, giving it a bold silhouette and a sense of grandeur, and is almost always clad with slate shingles and punctuated by dormer windows. Pavilions usually break forward from the building line in the center of the elevation and are accentuated by a corresponding break in the man-

Figure 8: The St. Louis Courthouse and Post Office Building, designed by Alfred Mullett and constructed 1873-1888. Of the seven large-scale urban complexes designed by Mullett while Supervising Architect of the Treasury, only this building and the OEOB survive. It has recently been renovated and serves as a public center that houses a combination of government offices and retail space. Library of Congress.

Figure 9: The New York County Courthouse and Post Office Building, designed by Alfred Mullett and constructed 1869-1875. Photographed in 1938 shortly before its demolition, this was the most important structure Mullett designed prior to receiving the commission for the State, War, and Navy Building.

Library of Congress.

sard. Often used to anchor the ends as well, these pavilions reinforce the texture of the facade created by superimposed orders and result in a total effect of Baroque movement and plasticity. Other features which define the Second Empire style are the use of such Classical and Renaissance forms as round-arched windows, superimposed orders (rows of columns and pilasters placed on successive stories and oftentimes at varying degrees of depth), carved brackets, heavy window enframements, and symmetrical ground plans.

Although individual elements of the style can be traced back as far as antiquity, the roots of the Second Empire style as a cohesive architectural mode can be identified in their early stages in such seventeenth-century Baroque masterworks as Jacques Lemercier's Pavillon de l'Horloge at the Louvre, dating from 1624 to 1643, and to buildings designed by François Mansart, such as his masterpiece, the Château de Maisons, built between 1643 and 1651, now known as Maison-Lafitte. Indeed, the mansard roof takes its name from Mansart who, although he did not invent the form, popularized it throughout Europe with his monumental châteaux designs.

Unlike their contemporaries in Europe, American architects were not directly influenced by these French Baroque buildings. Rather, they became acquainted with the style through a revival of interest in the mansard during the first half of the nineteenth century. The building which did the most to foster the international popularity of the mansard roof and what was to become known as the French Second Empire style was the extension of the Louvre that Napoleon III commissioned from Louis Visconti in 1852 (Figure 10). For this huge new office wing Visconti used Lemercier's Pavillon de l'Horloge as his prototype, repeating Lemercier's basic pavilion form six times. Visconti died shortly after he completed the design, however, and Hector Lefuel took over the project, richly embellishing the original elevations with additional sculptural detail. Despite their attempts to create a new style for Napoleon III's Second Empire that would be recognized as distinctly French, Visconti and Lefuel's New Louvre was a conservative work that was largely dependent not only upon seventeenth-century French architecture, but also upon earlier nineteenth-century prototypes that featured mansardic styles.[15] Ironically, the style exemplified by the New Louvre had little direct influence in France and virtually none at all in Paris. It did, however, succeed in establishing a mansardic style as one sufficiently cosmopolitan for modern public buildings in almost every part of the world outside of France. To foreigners, the New Louvre stood as a symbol of the opulence to be found in the Paris of Napoleon III and of the widespread restoration of past architectural glories brought about there by his unprecedented urban renewal campaign. This opulence was naturally appealing to almost any architectural audience, but found particular favor with those countries boasting a less extensive or impressive architectural heritage. It is this internationally popular style that became known specifically as the French Second Empire and that exercised such a pervasive influence upon American architecture during the late 1860s and 1870s. Its connotations of prestige, affluence, and authority, and of cosmopolitan Paris itself, were especially attractive to the partical men of commerce and government who shaped much of America's urban fabric during this period of unprecedented growth.[16]

A few isolated examples of the style reached America in the early 1850s,[17] but it was not until after the Paris Exposition of 1855 and the completion of the Louvre in 1857 that the French Second Empire style became widely fashionable for all types of buildings in the United States. In the decade following the Civil War it reached its peak of popularity in America, largely because of its prevalence in Mullett's buildings. Its appearance as virtually the only style for large government buildings during the presidency of Ulysses S. Grant from 1869 to 1877 eventually lent the Second Empire style the appellation the "General Grant Style." In America, though, the mansard roof and other hallmarks of Second Empire design were not commonly recognized as architectural features derived from France, a fact made clear by several nineteenth-century descriptions of the OEOB. Architectural critics and laymen alike failed to connect the building's style with that of French architecture, citing in-

Figure 10: The New Louvre, Pavillon Denon, designed by Louis Visconti and Hector Lefuel and built 1852-1857. The widely publicized additions to the Louvre sponsored by Emperor Louis Napoleon were directly responsible for the international popularity of the French Second Empire style. Library of Congress.

stead the Italian Renaissance or Roman Doric styles as the source for its individual motifs.

The first major public monument in America designed in the French Second Empire style and one of its great surviving masterpieces is the former Corcoran Gallery of Art built by Washington banker and art collector, William Wilson Corcoran. Now the Renwick Gallery, it was designed in 1859 by James Renwick for a site across the street from the old War and Navy Department buildings that would, in time, be replaced by the OEOB. Corcoran and Renwick had traveled together to the influential Paris Exposition in 1855 and were thus familiar with contemporary design trends in France. The New Louvre in particular seems to have impressed them both, as the Renwick Gallery bears a striking resemblance to Visconti's design in its convex mansard roof and sculptural details. Completed at the outbreak of the Civil War, it was soon commandeered by the government for use by the State Department, which had outgrown its small building east of the White House. Thus, the history of this early Second Empire style masterpiece is closely linked to the history of the larger monument that was soon to be erected across Pennsylvania Avenue. Begun only twelve years later, the State, War, and Navy Building would proclaim American adaptation of the style in no uncertain terms.

The Corcoran Gallery was soon followed by the first of the large Second Empire style government buildings, Arthur Gilman and Gridley Bryant's Boston City Hall of 1861. This gray granite building played an extremely important role in the development of the French Second Empire style in America and had a profound influence upon Alfred Mullett, whose designs for the Courthouse and Post Office in New York City show the direct influence of the Boston building in their massing and detail. An imposing frontispiece, projecting porticos, superimposed orders, round-arched windows, and a bold mansard roof characterized both the Boston City Hall and the New York Courthouse and Post Office, the two structures that first established the French Second Empire style as an appropriate one for civic buildings throughout America. So influential were their designs, in fact, that cities such as Detroit, Pittsburgh, and most prominently, Philadelphia, soon followed the example by erecting enormous Second Empire style city halls.

The buildings designed by Mullett while he was Supervising Architect of the Treasury were among the finest interpretations of the French Second Empire style in America. Although his designs cannot be called completely innovative, they were original in their synthesis of European and American design principles and went far to define the style as the most suitable architectural mode for public buildings in this country. In the twentieth century, however, heavily ornamented French Second Empire style buildings rapidly lost their original appeal, first as Classical Revival styles gained momentum, and then as modernism swept the country. Consequently, comparatively few of the major monuments of the style or, for that matter, of many other Victorian architectural modes, escaped the wrecking ball. The few great buildings that do survive, particularly the OEOB, the St. Louis Courthouse and Post Office, and the city halls in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Boston, are precious relics of a past era.

Design

After Secretary of State Hamilton Fish convinced Mullett to accept the commission for the design of the State, War, and Navy Building early in 1870, the architect immediately began drawing elevations and plans. These must have been prepared in haste, since by April 16 of that year, Fish wrote in his diary that a Cabinet meeting he had shown Mullett's plans for a new building for the State, War, and Navy Departments.[18] Mullett's plans from the outset were undoubtedly for a French Second Empire style structure, much to the dismay of the Secretary of War. Secretary Belknap was in favor of a building designed in the "Grecian style" and was probably supportive of a Greek Revival style design submitted in 1870 by Thomas U. Walter. At the April 16 meeting, however, the three secretaries involved with the design and construction of the new building -- Hamilton Fish of State, William Belknap of War, and George Robeson of Navy -- agreed to Mullett's distinctive design.[19]

The original drawings Mullett presented to the Cabinet in 1870 have been lost, but two elevations approved by Fish, Belknap, and Robeson in 1871 are extant in copies dated 1880. They show a tightly massed French Second Empire style structure which in its basic form closely resembles the completed work[20] (Figure 11). The design is essentially an enlargement of Mullett's earlier federal buildings in Boston and in New York, utilizing the same traditional French motifs -- but here these forms are arranged in a dynamic fashion that lends vital interest and unity to the extremely long elevations. Each facade is symmetrically massed, but individual units project and recede dramatically from the building line, evoking a sense of Baroque movement that is further enhanced by the plasticity created on the facade's surface by superimposed orders and sculptural detail. Actually, the number of different forms used on the exterior is quite limited, but the manner in which this vocabulary of basic motifs is manipulated and repeated gives the OEOB its distinctive style and character.

The 1880 drawings show a composite four- and five-story edifice that sits on a massive rusticated base. The shorter, virtually identical north and south facades are each emphasized by a seven-bay frontispiece that steps out from the building line in three sections. The frontispiece is anchored by a long flight of steps and is accented by a two-story, three-bay entrance portico supported by paired Doric columns and lined with balustrades. Paired Doric pilasters mark the window bays, and each window is set within a full stone enframement. A row of paired Ionic pilasters supports the central pediment capping the frontispiece, and it in turn is sur-

Figure 11: "North and South Fronts of New State, War, and Navy Departments." This drawing is labelled a "true copy" of Mullett's original design of 1871 and is dated January 12, 1880. It shows the north and south elevations of the building as they were originally planned, before Mullett changed the first floor windows and the central mansard roof. Avery Library, Columbia University.

mounted by a complex five-part roof which rises a full story higher than the remainder of the wing.

The frontispiece on each elevation is connected to the corner pavilions by two six-bay wings which are extremely simple in their detail. Above the rusticated ground floor the three principal stories feature rows of windows capped by projecting lintels that rest on simple bases. Each floor is separated from the next by a Doric entablature that acts as a stringcourse, and both wings are surmounted by a continuous mansard roof with three dormer windows. Three-bay end pavilions, detailed in a manner similar to that of the central unit but on a substantially less grand scale, project from the adjoining wing and anchor each of the building's corners. The east and west elevations are almost double the length of the south and north wings, but their design is essentially the same.

This basic design scheme remained unchanged, but Mullett did make alterations during the design and construction phases of the project. The most significant change involved the central mansards of the north and south wings. In the original plan the two end sections of each of these five-part mansards were to be placed at lower levels than the remainder of the roof. Later drawings, including those in the collection of the National Archives and a view copied by Henry H. Lovie from a Mullett drawing, show that the transitional end sections of the mansard were raised to the level of the rest of the frontispiece roof and that a full fourth story was

Figure 12: "S. W. View of the State, War, and Navy Building." This 1873 illustration by Henry Lovie was based upon a drawing by Mullett which no longer exists. The segmental pediment at the apex of each central mansard first appears in this view. The eagle that crowns the central pediment is a motif borrowed from a design for Boston City Hall that was never placed on the building. The White House and Treasury Building are visible to the right. National Archives and Records Service.

added (Figure 12). Also altered were the ocular windows planned for the mansard, transformed in later drawings to full dormers. These changes created a much stronger emphasis upon the central portions of the north and south elevations of the building. Also important in this transformation was Mullett's decision to change the first floor windows. Rather than the round-arched enframements originally planned, he replaced the windows with rectangluar openings similar to the ones on the second and third stories and varied them slightly from the triangular pediments and flat lintels of the second and third floors by giving them segmental pediments (Figures 13, 14, 15).

Mullett made other changes which can be seen in the Lovie drawing and on the building itself. The design of the central mansard on the north and south wings apparently continued to trouble him, for in the final design he reintroduced the chimneys -- evident in the 1880 drawing, but missing from the later Archives drawing -- that separated the central and end sections of the mansard. The inclusion of these chimneys successfully accents the complexity of the five-part mansards as well as the transitional nature of the end sections that connect the frontispiece and side wings. Mullett also altered the design of the central dormers, reducing them from tripartite openings to single rectangular windows. The segmental pediments filled with symbolic sculpture were also added at this time (Figure 16). In addition, among several other less significant changes made in the course of construction, the north wing entrance was altered to include three round-arched doorways rather than the single rectangular ones of all the other entrances.

Although the building is, as a whole, a model of Second Empire style design, certain details reflect the influence of a contemporary French architectural style known as the Neo-Grèc. Neo-Grèc theory had been introduced in France by Henri Labrouste and a few of his contemporaries in such works as the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève in the first half of the century and by the 1850s was becoming more popular there than the mansardic mode adopted by Visconti and Lefuel at the Louvre. Intellectually very complex, the style asserted the structure and function of a building's individual components rather than disguising them, a concept that ultimately had its roots in the simplicity of Greek post and lintel construction principles.

Figures 13, 14, and 15: Window enframements of the first, second, and third floors. The brackets supporting the pediments and lintels display the linear, geometric quality typical of Neo-Grèc design, as do the column capitals and elements of the Doric frieze.

Richard Cheek for the Dunlap Society, 1976.

Figure 16: Von Ezdorf designed this martial sculpture for the cast-iron pediment of the central mansard of the north wing. The empty suit of armor was a popular French Baroque design motif and was especially appropriate for display on the exterior of the War Department's wing of the OEOB. National Archives and Records Service.

These principles were influential for several decades in Europe, but were not as appealing to American architects in their promotion of expressionism and thus were largely ignored. They did adopt, however, certain aspects of the style that coincided with their aesthetic priorities and technological capabilities. In its advocacy of the distillation and stylization of traditional classical forms, Neo-Grêc ornamentation was perfectly suited to the use of the new stone-cutting machine that had recently been widely adopted by American architects. Although these machines were primitive and unable to carve the complex foliate detail commonly found on many French Second Empire style works, they lent themselves easily to the cutting of simplified Neo-Grêc forms. Furthermore, they enabled architects to plan for enormous amounts of detail on large-scale buildings without facing the difficulties -- or the impossibility -- of locating the large numbers of skilled craftsmen that hand-carving would require and of paying for their skills. Delays in construction time for each project were also avoided by using these machines. All of these factors came into play in the construction of the OEOB, where Neo-Grêc influence can be identified on the exterior of the building in the crisp, machine-cut brackets that support the lintels, the column capitals and in the triglyphs and metopes that form the frieze (Figure 17). Many other details on the interior reflect these design principles as well.

On June 21, 1871, soon after Congress officially authorized construction of the building, ground was broken. In order to disrupt the work of the War and Navy departments as little as possible, it was decided that construction would be undertaken one wing at a time, allowing Old War and Old Navy to remain in use as construction of the south and east wings proceeded around them. Mullett had apparently hoped to speed up construction of the new building, writing to Fish in his 1873 annual report that if Old War

Figure 17: Detail of the facade showing a part of the Doric frieze, moldings, and column capitals that adorn the entire building. The use of stone-cutting machines made this kind of elaborate detail possible throughout the exterior. Richard Cheek for the Dunlap Society, 1976.

and Old Navy were immediately demolished it would take only five years rather than eight to complete the building.[21] Mullett's plan for speedier construction was overruled, however, and final completion was to take fifteen more years.

Ironically, the two men largely responsible for initiating the design and construction of the building, Hamilton Fish and Alfred Mullett, witnessed its completion as outsiders uninvolved with decisions regarding its development. Mullett was the first to relinquish his position, resigning as Supervising Architect of the Treasury in October 1874 after a series of disagreements with the new Secretary of the Treasury, Benjamin Bristow. He was persuaded to remain in office until the end of the year but refused Fish's pleas to continue supervision of the State, War, and Navy project. Then in January 1875, induced by Mullett's resignation and the impending completion of the State Department wing, Fish requested that he too "be relieved from further scrutiny and control in the construction of the remaining part of the building."[22]

Mullett was briefly succeeded by the new Supervising Architect of the Treasury, William Potter, who -- although destined to become one of America's greatest late nineteenth-century architects[23] -- had little impact upon the building during his tenure, designing only the original angular exterior lamps which are now, unfortunately, no longer in place.

Upon Fish's resignation, responsibility for overseeing construction was transferred to the War Department under the aegis of Colonel Orville Babcock, a close confidant of President Grant and the Commissioner of Public Buildings. In 1877 he was replaced by Colonel Thomas Lincoln Casey, an appropriate choice for such a large scale project, since he had been involved with the construction of fortifications for the Army Corps of Engineers. Casey saw the building through to its completion eleven years later. He adhered closely to Mullett's original exterior designs throughout and relied upon the interiors of the south wing, the only ones designed under Mullett's jurisdiction, to dictate the general appearance of the remaining wings. Fortunately, Casey was very sensitive to the architectural integrity of the building as a whole and always maintained this concern for unity of design throughout his term as project supervisor. His choice of Richard Von Ezdorf to design the remaining interiors is further testimony to this rather surprising sensitivity and one that resulted in a series of rooms that not only harmonized with Mullett's designs, but complemented them beautifully.

Richard Von Ezdorf (1848-1926) was born into an aristocratic Austrian family in Venice, then a part of the Austrian Empire. Having studied architecture in Germany and Austria, he immigrated to the United States in 1872 and one year later first appeared on Mullett's payroll as a draftsman.[24] Responsible for the designs of many of the building's most lavish interior spaces, Von Ezdorf also designed some of the exterior details, including the sculptural groups that fill the segmental pediments atop the mansards. Whether or not Von Ezdorf had actually designed interiors for the OEOB's south wing as a draftsman under Mullett or was only familiar with them through his early affiliation with him, he was undoubtedly sympathetic with the architect's taste for interior design. His work shows not only an intimate knowledge of contemporary European architectural trends and an adept ability to design interiors of significant artistic merit, but also an ability to conform to a previously established format while maintaining an extraordinary degree of originality. Thus, although interior spaces and decorative features were designed by both Mullett and Von Ezdorf over a period of many years, their combined efforts resulted in a calculated, coherent design scheme for the entire building.

Construction

The OEOB's seventeen-year construction period began on June 21, 1871, with the demolition of the former White House stables and ground-breaking for the south wing. After seven long months of preliminary digging, the first of thousands of blocks of granite was set in place for the building's foundation. Granite was carefully selected by the architect and came from two quarries: the stonework for the exterior facing of the base and for the courtyards from Vinal Haven, Fox Island, Maine, and the slightly darker stone for the exterior walls and porticos from a site near Richmond, Virginia. These two sources were chosen because the quarries were large enough to supply materials for the entire building, and because the stone was of uniform color and texture with no iron or other impurities that might discolor the walls. Mullett was apparently pleased with the results of these selections, commenting that the two types of stone created "a pleasing contrast."[25] The granite was carefully cut into blocks and numbered to coincide with Mullett and Casey's detailed construction drawings. These drawings, now in the collection of the National Archives, delineate the specific size and placement of virtually every block of granite on the exterior.

Shortly after stone cutting began in Virginia, political problems arose regarding personnel for the Richmond quarries. Several employees of the Internal Revenue Service and a number of Virginia Republican groups accused Superintendent of the Works Willard E. Smith of firing Republicans, of hiring only Democrats, and of using his influence against the Republican party. Records do not indicate the outcome of this controversy, only one of many that would mark the construction of the OEOB, and work seems to have continued uninterrupted. During construction, the granite was hoisted into place by pulleys connected to wooden derricks that rested on heavy wooden trestles supported by the foundation of the building. As work progressed, the derricks were raised by increasing the height of these trestles. The derricks were operated by hand or by steam power and capable of carrying blocks weighing over ten tons (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Construction photograph taken November 18, 1871, showing the placement of the foundation stones for the sub-basement of the State Department's south wing. The wooden derricks, each comprised of a sixty-five-foot vertical mast and a seventy-foot horizontal boom, were used to lift the granite blocks into place. The White House and its complex of greenhouses (no longer in existence) can be seen in the background.

Library of Congress


June 29, 1885

Almost all of the material used in the construction of the OEOB was fireproof in accordance with the 1871 congressional statute. The annual report submitted by Thomas Casey to the Secretary of War on June 30, 1878, reviewed the use of fireproof materials in the building:

> It will be noted that the only wood or combustible material entering into the construction of this building is in the surfacing of Georgia pine, laid airtight and closely matched upon the office floors only; in the doors, partly of white pine, but mainly of mahogany; in the interior casing and finish of water-closets and bathrooms, chiefly with black walnut; and in the window-sash, of solid mahogany. All else consists of stone, brick, concrete, plaster iron, copper, and glass.[26]

The OEOB was under construction continuously from June 21, 1871, until its completion on January 31, 1888, a seventeen-year building period that remains one of the longest for a single building in American architectural history. Construction of the south wing for the State Department was completed in December 1875, and ground was broken for the Navy Department's east wing on July 14, 1872. This portion was completed and occupied on April 16, 1879, but work did not begin on the northern War Department wing until completion of the east wing, since its construction entailed the demolition of the old War Building and necessitated the temporary relocation of War offices in the northern half of the east wing. Ground was broken for the north wing on June 17, 1879, and it was occupied by the War Department in February of 1883, although its approaches were not completed until sixteen months later. The last phase of construction, comprising the west and center wings also assigned to the War Department, was begun on March 31, 1884, following the demolition of Old Navy and was completed in January of 1888 (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Construction photograph taken June 29, 1885, showing progress being made on the west and center wings for the War Department. The open windows and projecting awnings indicate that the east wing was occupied by the Navy Department by this time.

Library of Congress

In the early years of construction, the OEOB was for the most part well received by the public who, judging from contemporary guidebooks, were particularly impressed by its size and costliness, if not by its architectural character. The building was then described as being "large and magnificent,"[27] "substantial and imposing,"[28] as having "few equals in the world,"[29] and as combining "the massive proportions of ancient, with the elegance of modern architecture."[30] Enthusiasm for the OEOB was short-lived, however, as was Victorian passion for almost any architectural trend. By 1888, the French Second Empire style no longer enjoyed the architectural limelight, having been replaced by other styles, particularly the Romanesque Revival style, and later by works of Classical and Renaissance inspiration. The Classical Revival, whether it manifested itself in the Beaux-Arts extravaganzas of the late nineteenth century or in the more sober interpretations of the Neo-Classicists in the early twentieth, constituted one of the major trends in American architecture for some time and, with the help of the contemporary and equally potent Modernist movement, forced the demise of the romantic architectural styles of the post Civil War period. Unfortunately, the result of this revival was the demolition of a myriad of Victorian era monuments, including most of Mullett's major buildings. Mavericks of style that stood as reminders of a bygone age, they suffered a fate common to countless late nineteenth-century buildings. No longer regarded as elegant statements of American prosperity and urban growth, they came to be perceived as the unfortunate products of a momentary lapse in taste.

The OEOB only narrowly escaped the fate of so many contemporary structures that had rebelled against the white classicism of the pre-war federal city. As Mullett's building lost favor, the Greek Revival style Treasury Building next door gained in estimation, a natural consequence of the sweeping return to academic classicism then taking place. The belief eventually arose that Mullett had disregarded the intent of Congress when he designed the State, War, and Navy Building. Although there was no evidence upon which to base this assertion, critics insisted that Congress had intended a twin of the Treasury for the site west of the White House, thereby insinuating that Mullett had, in effect, broken the law with his deliberately non-classical design. Accordingly, elaborate plans were developed to redesign the exterior of the building in Classical Revival styles that would complement, if not mirror, Mills's Treasury. In 1917, John Russell Pope, who was later to design such hallmarks of Washington Neo-Classicism as the National Gallery's West Building, the Jefferson Memorial, and the National Archives Building, first sketched such a plan, but nothing came of it. Thirteen years later, however, the OEOB's ziggurat-like facade was more seriously threatened. In 1930, Waddy B. Wood, architect of several Washington buildings including the Woodrow Wilson house and the Textile Museum, was commissioned to remodel the building. Three million dollars was authorized by Congress for the "refacing and refinishing of the exterior, and for such remodeling and reconstructing and changes in approaches as will make it harmonize generally in architectural appearance with the Treasury Building."[31] Wood's static design was naturally well received, imitating as it did the familiar Millsian formula, and was immediately approved by the conservative National Commission of Fine Arts in June of 1931 (Figure 20). Fortunately, last minute contract disputes and financing problems brought about by the Depression forced the cancellation of these ambitious but misguided plans.

Figure 20: "Perspective of Scheme No. 2 Showing State, War, and Navy Building Re-faced, Not Using Pilasters," ca. 1930. This is one of several elevations prepared by Waddy B. Wood for the redesign of the OEOB that received Congressional approval.

Library of Congress.

The building was not yet out of danger, however. In 1957, crowded conditions in the executive West Wing of the White House were such that President Eisenhower established an Advisory Commission on Presidential Office Space to study the problem and devise possible solutions. The Commission's report recommended that the

OEOB be demolished in order to clear the site for a seven-story office building that would house the entire Executive Office of the President as well as several other agencies. These plans proved to be significant in the building's history, for they immediately engendered a tremendous amount of controversy among Washingtonians and spotlighted what amounted to an important change in attitude towards Mullett's design. Members of the artistic and political communities alike were divided, and rather emotionally so, between those who regarded the building as an outmoded, inefficient eyesore deserving of the wrecking ball, and those who recognized it as a national monument worthy of preservation not only for historic reasons, but for aesthetic ones as well. For the first time in the twentieth century, then, the building was beginning to be regarded by the public for its formal characteristics, praised rather than scorned as a refreshing outcast in what was becoming a city of white temples and concrete and glass boxes. The controversy continued for another three years with no further attempt to solve the problems of insufficient presidential office space until 1960, when President Eisenhower made another effort to revive the Commission's plan. Again the proposal prompted heated debate in the halls of Congress as well as in the press until 1961, when the Public Buildings Service of the General Services Administration, lacking a clear mandate for its demolition, announced that the building would "stand indefinitely."[32] Thus, at the eleventh hour, the future of the OEOB was secured, ensuring for future generations of federal workers, Washingtonians, and visitors from all over the country a monument to their national history and artistic achievement.

Seen especially in the light of these repeated attempts to raze the OEOB over the years, it now seems incomprehensible that its destruction was even considered, for it has always remained, at the very least, an efficient structure capable of accommodating the functions of a modern office. Given the inevitability of drastic changes in architectural taste, it is understandable that the flamboyant exterior of the building would at one time or another fall out of favor and efforts be made to alter its facade. But demolition of the entire structure hardly seems a responsible choice, then or now. Today, however, the future of the OEOB is secure. Protected by federal laws set forth in the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the building and its site were placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971 and on the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites by the Historic Landmarks Office in 1972, status which protects it from any future proposals for major alteration, reconstruction, or demolition and provides for its preservation as an historic monument and important cultural resource.

Interior Design

The exterior of the OEOB is familiar to the millions of people who visit the White House each year and to the thousands who work in downtown Washington, its looming presence to the west of the executive mansion on Pennsylvania Avenue hardly able to go unnoticed. Among architectural historians the building is also well known, as it is illustrated in several histories of American architecture as an outstanding example of the Second Empire style.[33] Yet, because it is no longer open to the public, as it was for many years after its completion, very few people are familiar with its spectacular interiors. The most imposing interior spaces form a surprising contrast to the dignity of its monochromatic exterior, for they are highly ornamented and feature complex, often vividly colored decorative detail. An extraordinary amount of attention was paid not only to the creation of unique interior spaces, but also to their embellishment. The dominant architectural features in the building, including the cantilevered stairways, spacious offices, skylit domes, and long black and white marble corridors lined with columns and pilasters, were executed with a considerable measure of originality and were complemented by similar innovations in design details. Encaustic tile and inlaid marquetry floors, bronze balusters, mantels, and lamps -- even the knobs and hinges of the huge mahogany and pine doors -- were designed and executed with exacting care and craftsmanship. Indeed, within some of the rooms in the OEOB, these features coalesce to create interiors that rank among the finest survivals of the Victorian era in America.

Mullett was probably responsible for the design of the interiors of the State Department south wing, for although he may not have designed every detail, he supervised the work of his assistants and draftsmen closely and approved all of the completed drawings during his tenure as Supervising Architect. It is not known what part Richard Von Ezdorf played in the design of these early interiors. His first appearance on the payrolls of the State Department wing in 1873 would seem to indicate that he was involved with the building during Mullett's tenure and that he may have been responsible for designing its interior features. Most of the interiors of the remaining wings, however, were certainly Von Ezdorf's work. In 1876 he was transferred to the War Department's payroll and for the next ten years devoted his career solely to designs for the OEOB. Working during this time under the supervision of Thomas Lincoln Casey, Von Ezdorf created a series of rooms rarely equaled in American Victorian architecture for their sophistication and extraordinary beauty.

The drawings that represent Mullett's earliest surviving designs for the executive building are dated 1871 and contain a single ground plan that shows its basic form -- four major wings and two large interior courts separated by a central wing -- but they illustrate only the general arrangement of the interiors (Figure 21). This plan shows each

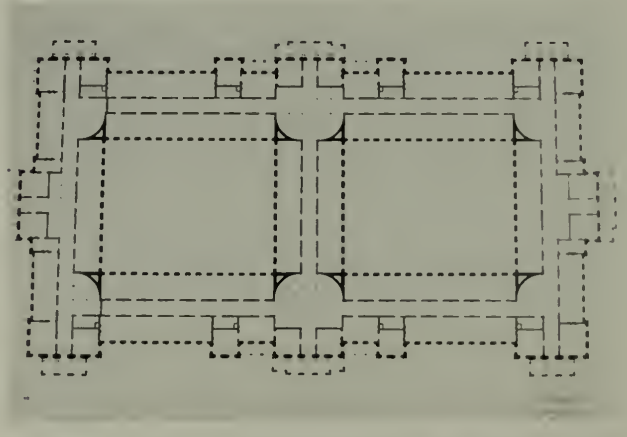


Figure 21: "Plan of New State, War, and Navy Departments. First Floor," an 1880 replica of Mullett's 1871 plan labelled a "true copy." This early plan indicates the general arrangement of the interiors but does not delineate specific office spaces.

Avery Library, Columbia University.

wing composed of a central corridor with offices set to either side, end staircases in the north and south wings, and central double stairways in the east and west wings. As plans progressed, the space in each wing was divided into large, centrally located offices

for the cabinet secretaries, substantial offices for high level assistants, small offices for lower-level workers, and large group offices for clerks and other assistants. A large multi-story space was also set aside in each wing, three of which were eventually used as departmental libraries.

A particularly surprising feature of the interior, considering the grandeur of the exterior and the emphasis placed upon its approaches, is the lack of at least one monumental entrance lobby. Instead, the four entrance vestibules, three of which have been subdivided into offices, were simple spaces demarcated by columns and pilasters. Since the building was designed as an office structure, it was apparently decided not to waste space in the creation of unnecessary ceremonial areas.

A network of corridors traverses the entire structure and originally provided access to the porticos of the end pavilions. All of the corridors of the four principal floors are lined with cast-iron columns and pilasters of two subtly varied designs which illustrate the change in architectural taste that occurred during the building's construction period. The same fluted Composite columns and pilasters designed by Mullett for the south wing also line the corridors in the east wing, featuring acanthus-leaf foliage in the same taut, non-naturalistic Neo-Grèc manner that expresses itself in certain elements on the exterior of the building. This architectonic approach to design is particularly noticeable in the small flower in the center of each capital, called a fleuron, and in the large, skeletal corner leaves which also exhibit the flat, linear stylization common to Neo-Grèc ornament (Figure 22). In contrast to these geometric solutions, the columns and pilasters designed later by Von Ezdorf for the north, west, and center wings have different proportions and capitals of a different design (Figure 23). Much more lush and organic, they reflect a renewed interest in naturalistic forms that began to emerge in the 1880s. Although they are based upon Mullett's south wing designs, thereby adhering to Casey's desire for uniformity of design throughout the building, the leaves and fleurons of these capitals are fully modeled and are more clearly identifiable as naturalistic forms. Slight variations in the fluting and banding of these columns were also introduced by Von Ezdorf.

Each column and pilaster supports a full entablature with classical moldings and an ornamental plaster frieze that forms the base for the vaulted cast-iron ceilings. The corridors were originally painted white with chromatic highlights on the columns and pilasters and were lit by ornamental brass gasoliers designed by Von Ezdorf. Natural light flowed into the corridors through transom windows above the office doors and through the four skylights in the north and south stairwell domes, adding to the dramatic effect created by the hallway floors of alternating squares of black and white marble set within black borders. Also important to the creation of this effect are the original mahogany and pine doors that lead to each office. Adding a rich brown coloration to the otherwise limited palette of the corridors today, each is surrounded by cast-iron enframements with egg-and-dart and Greek fret designs and is beautifully accented by ornate

Figure 22: Column capital of the Composite order designed by Mullett for the south and east wings. Like many of the exterior decorative elements, these capitals are extremely stylized. Their skeletal leaves, inverted volutes, and flat, central fleuron reflect the influence of the Neo-Grèc. White House.

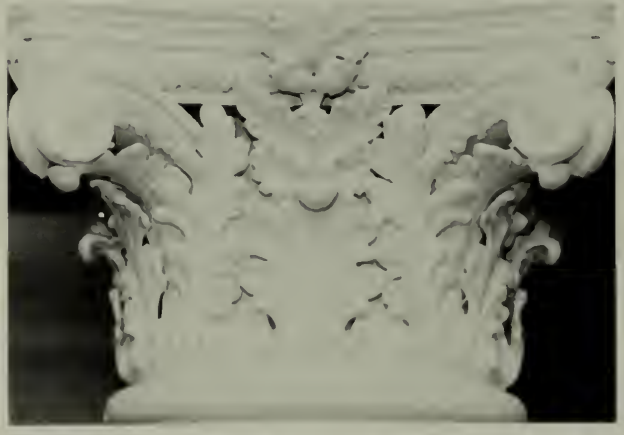
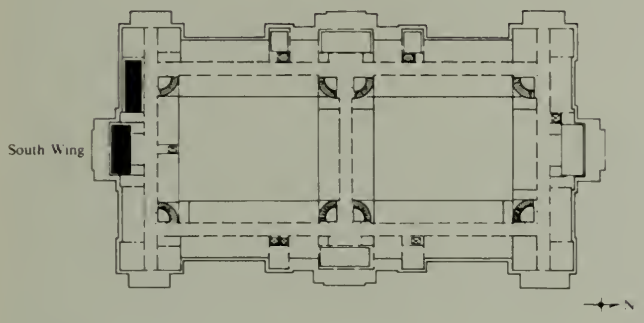


Figure 23: Column capital of the Corinthian order designed by Richard Von Ezdorf for the north, west, and center wings. The acanthus leaves on these capitals are much more naturalistic than those of the earlier ones and reflect a change in taste that occurred in the 1880s. White House

brass hardware. Of special interest too are the doorknobs designed by Von Ezdorf; there are three different types in the building, each with an insignia representing the department that originally occupied the offices (Figures 24, 25, and 26).

Figures 24, 25, and 26: The three types of doorknobs designed by Von Ezdorf for the State, War, and Navy departments, each bearing a modified version of the department seal. Most of these doorknobs survive and remain in place with the original mahogany and pine doors. White House.

The State Department Wing



When the south wing for the State Department was first opened, it had three spectacular rooms designed to be showplaces for this most important of government departments. Of these three -- the Secretary of State's office, the Diplomatic Reception Room, and the State Department Library --only the library retains a substantial amount of original detail.

The office of the Secretary of State was located at the center of the second floor with three windows opening onto the south portico and a view of the Potomac River. The room once contained extensive areas of painted ornament, described in a contemporary issue of Harper's New Monthly Magazine as "Egyptian figures in gray chocolate and gilt, traced upon a pearl ground."[34] The abstract stenciled patterns were, in fact, more Greek than Egyptian in derivation, but were exquisitely painted and gilded and were complemented by the furniture, draperies, and Oriental rugs originally chosen for the room. All of the stenciled ornament has now been painted over and the furniture removed, but a massive mahogany fireplace mantel, beautifully carved with Doric columns flanking a stylized lion's head, survives as a reminder of the former richness of this small room (Figure 27).

Located just to the west of the Secretary's office, the sixty-foot Diplomatic Reception Room, designed to impress visiting foreign dignitaries, was even more spectacular (Figure 28). The room was embellished with painted walls and ceiling in patterns variously described as "Egyptian,"[35] and "Germanized Egyptian."[36] A wood floor laid with oriental rugs, a massive mirror, framed portraits, and carved and upholstered furniture added to the room's rich decorative scheme. Since only the ebony mantels remain, the room having been stripped of its furniture and subdivided in 1931, a contemporary description of 1884 may serve to evoke its original flavor:

> The floor is inlaid with hard wood highly polished, and covered with two thick Turkish rugs. Two long tables of ebonized wood with dark velvet tops occupy the space down the center of the room. The furniture, consisting of sofas, armchairs, and luxurious divans, is also of ebonized wood and upholstered in figured brocade of somber colors, blended so harmoniously as to produce the general effect of blue-gray; gold thread is woven with the brocade and adds very much to the richness of the material. The three large windows are heavily draped with brocade, looped back with cords and tassels over fine lace curtains. The ceiling is very high and exquisitely frescoed in the same quiet colors prevailing in the furniture. A large square mirror with frame of ebony is in the wall opposite the windows, and beautifully carved mantels of the same kind of wood occupy the space at the ends of the rooms. There are three highly polished chandeliers, and a pair of grates of burnished steel.[37]

The finest surviving room in the south wing is the former State Department Library, now the White House Library and Research Center, a four-story space located directly above the former office of the Secretary of State. The library projects into the corridor, creating a narrow hallway passage leading into the room which Mullett seems to have

Figure 27: Detail of the mahogany mantelpiece in the former office of the Secretary of State in the south wing. Several of the OEOB's offices still retain their mantels, which were built according to many different designs and in various materials, but this is one of the finest in the building. White House.

Figure 28: The State Department's Diplomatic Reception Room, photographed ca. 1885. This room was designed to impress foreign dignitaries received in the building by the Secretary of State and was decorated throughout with gold leaf and stencilling in rich Victorian colors. Noted in contemporary guidebooks as one of the city's finest rooms, its fabrics, rugs, and draperies were carefully selected to create a harmonious interior. In the early 1930s it was subdivided into several offices, but the room's original mahogany mantelpiece survives. Library of Congress.

designed purposefully in an effort to manipulate the progression from a small to a large space. Proceeding from the corridor into a short passage, one is confronted with a dramatic view overlooking the south portico and vista beyond that is heightened by the vividly colored encaustic tile floor in the foreground. As one steps out of this entrance passage, the space expands outward to a series of radiating alcoves and upward to three balcony tiers of bookshelves, a coved, painted ceiling with the only original stenciling that remains in the building, and a beautiful painted glass skylight.

The library consists of a large open space with four levels of recessed book stacks, three set on balconies (Figure 29). All of the library fittings are of fireproof cast iron, described in an 1884 guidebook as having been highlighted with "pure white and delicate pearl-colored decorations, touched here and there with gilt."[38] Each alcove is flanked by pairs of Corinthian pilasters, while the balconies are decorated with stylized Neo-Grèc ornament and are banded by iron railings with wheel panels. Iron casts of the State Department seal are set within the curved corners of the two upper balconies. Although the original pearl and gold coloration of the book stacks was lost long ago, the room has recently been repainted to approximate its original appearance. The ceiling, however, remains in its original state, divided into brown panels and highlighted by

Figure 29: The State Department Library, photographed ca. 1895. This room functions today as the White House Library and has recently been repainted to simulate its original appearance when it was first built in the 1870s. The encaustic tile floor is original to the room, and the coved ceiling surrounding the skylight retains the only original stencilling that survives in the building. A facsimile of the Declaration of Independence is visible on display in the large vault in the center of the picture. Library of Congress.

Greek decorations in gold paint that surround the glass sections of the ornamental skylight. An even more striking feature of the library is its beautiful encaustic tile floor. One of three such floors in the building comprised of English Minton tiles, its complex pattern includes varying designs of circles, ovals, flowers, and leaves of blue, yellow, brown, and white.

The State Department Library ranks among the more important interiors in the OEOB for historical as well as aesthetic reasons. Originally the room was the home of such important national documents as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution (facsimiles of the originals were actually displayed), both of which were later transferred to the collection of the National Archives. Presidential artifacts were also on view, including George Washington's sword, the desk upon which Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, and Benjamin Franklin's crabtree walking stick -- all now part of the Smithsonian Institution's collection. Open to the public for many years, the room was a popular stopping point on visitors' tours and was described in countless guidebooks as one of the most beautiful in Washington.

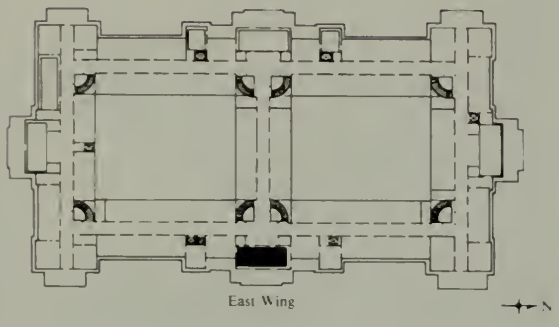
In addition to this spectacular room, the south wing contains two cantilevered granite staircases which swing in a series of graceful curves from the basement to the mansard. Both are crowned by domes punctuated with octagonal coffers and are filled with light by oval skylights designed in sunburst patterns that, most likely, were once probably inset with stained glass. It is in these stairwell domes too that subtle changes in design during the building's construction can be found. The domes and skylights in the later north wing are circular rather than oval and feature square coffers rather than octagonal ones (Figure 30). Mahogany handrails that accent the sweep of the stairs are supported by bronze balusters cast in extremely complex foliate designs, adding to the shimmering effect created by the natural light filtered into the dome through the skylights. Indeed, at the turn of the century when these balusters were polished daily to occupy a surplus of employees, one of the scrubwomen assigned to the task is said to have remarked with pride that the "golden stairs and marble halls looked just like heaven."[39]

Figure 30: The Northeast Dome. The staircases of the north and south wings are crowned by skylit domes that were originally painted in several different colors and highlighted with gold and silver leaf. Once probably lit by stained glass skylights, the plans, elevations, and details of the domes in the two wings reflect subtle changes in design that occurred in the years between their construction.

Richard Cheek for the Dunlap Society, 1976.

Impressive enough in their visual elegance, these spiraling stairways constitute a substantial technical achievement as well. Each granite step was carved as an individual component and is cantilevered eighteen inches into the wall, a support system that is reinforced by the notching of each riser over the tread below (Figure 31).

The Navy Department Wing



The east wing, which was designed for use by the Navy Department, was begun under Mullett's auspices, but its best interiors were designed by Von Ezdorf after Mullett's resignation in 1874. The halls in this wing were constructed using features identical to those of the south wing. The annual report for the year ending June 30, 1879, noted that this was done "in order to continue a uniform design and style of finish throughout the interior, as must be done upon the exterior of the building."[40]

Access to each floor is by means of an extraordinary double staircase winding from the basement to a domed fifth-floor rotunda. Like those in the south wing, no two flights are identical in plan and each granite tread is unique in shape, a complexity in Mullett's design that proved to be a construction problem. The 1878 annual report to the Secretary of State recorded that

> Before the close of the last fiscal year, a contract was awarded for furnishing the cut granite for the two grand stairways of six flights each, in the center pavilion . . . . Owing to a misapprehension on the part of the contractor as to the extent and difficulty of such a piece of work, in which no two steps of a flight could be precisely alike, besides the differences between several of the flights themselves, a tedious and unexpected delay attended the whole work.[41]

The balusters of these stairs, which are identical to those of the south wing staircases, provided the same unexpected difficulties and construction delays.

Irregular in shape, the east wing's cast-iron rotunda is one of the finest ornamental designs in the building and retains almost all of its original features (Figure 32). The centerpiece of the dome is an oval skylight composed of a central pendant, around which is woven a series of circular, hexagonal and star-shaped lights set within an iron framework which recent restoration efforts have revealed to be in patterns of red, white, and blue glass. Mythological figures, half human and half foliate, fill the triangular spandrel panels between the skylight and coved borders of the ceiling, which are decorated with overscaled, stylized plant forms. The presence of these half human forms is particularly interesting, as figural sculpture is found only in a few of the building's design details; for the most part, decorative elements are limited to foliate forms and abstract patterns. It was believed for some time that the rotunda was originally polychromed with hues typical of what has come to be known as the "Victorian palette," but recent paint analysis has revealed that the entire dome was painted in an off-white color and highlighted throughout with gold and silver leaf, somewhat in the manner of the State Department Library, but on a considerably more elaborate scale.[42]

There are two rooms within the east wing that are of special interest: the office of the Vice President -- originally designed for and occupied by the Secretary of the Navy --located on the second floor opposite the

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Figure 31: The Northeast Staircase. The four corner staircases and two double staircases in the center wing are among the most notable design features in the building. Cantilevered eighteen inches into the stairwell, each granite step was individually carved and fitted to the one above it, a support system which allows for the apparent ease and elegance of their sweeping curves. Richard Cheek for the Dunlap Society, 1976.

Figure 32: "Design for Iron Ceiling and Skylight Over Main Stairs Center Pavilion." The details of the cast-iron floral panels surrounding the colored glass skylight of the east wing were slightly altered before construction, but the plan of the rotunda remained unchanged. The entire area was painted over in the early 1940s, but all elements of this extremely complex dome survive and have recently been restored.

National Archives and Records Service.

central stairs, and the reception room of the Navy Library, directly above the Vice President's office on the fourth and fifth floors.

The walls and vaulted ceiling of the former office of the Secretary of the Navy were originally painted in rich Victorian colors with Grecian-style stenciled ornament and naval insignia (Figure 33). An intricate marquetry floor of mahogany, cherry, and hickory laid in geometric designs, recently uncovered after years beneath carpeting, was designed expressly for the room by the Boston firm of W. J. McPherson (Figure 34). Like the Diplomatic Reception Room and the

Figure 33: The former office of the Secretary of the Navy, photographed ca. 1900. Like other offices in the building designed for the department secretaries and high-level assistants, this room was decorated with a substantial amount of stencilling and gold leaf. Now serving as the Vice President's office, it still retains its original black marble mantels and inlaid marquetry floor.

U. S. Naval Institute.

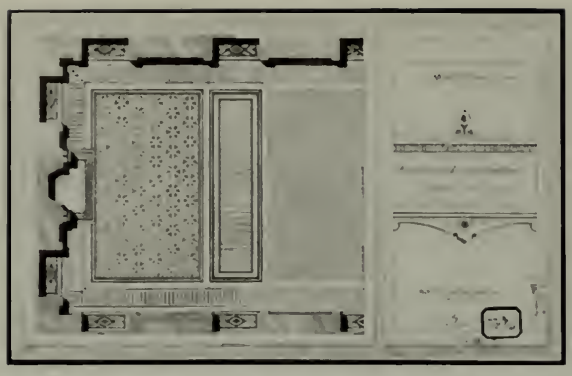


Figure 34: "Secretary of the Navy Department. Plan of Proposed Design for Mantelpiece and Marquetry Floor. To be Laid in Mahogany, Hickory, and Cherry." A large portion of this complex wooden floor, designed by W. J. McPherson of Boston, survives in the office of the Vice President. National Archives and Records Service.

former office of the Secretary of State, this room was lit by elaborate brass gasoliers designed by Von Ezdorf and was outfitted with the most luxurious furnishings of the period. Although now subdivided into two separate rooms, the Vice President's suite still retains its two original Belgian black marble fireplaces, complete with a gilt overmantel mirror richly embellished with carved nautical symbols. The effect created by the combination of all of these design features must have been impressive, as several descriptions of the office survive deeming it among the most beautiful in Washington. Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy during World War I, was especially enamored of the room, declaring his office not only the most beautiful in Washington, but in the entire world.[43]

Unquestionably the finest room in the east wing is the former Navy Library Reception Room, designed and installed in 1877 (Figure 35). Shortly after the department moved out of the building in 1918, it became known as the Indian Treaty Room, although no historical basis for this designation has been identified despite extensive research devoted to the subject. Clearly not designed to house the department's books or library operations, this extraordinary room was undoubtedly intended to be a space for entertaining, as was the Diplomatic Reception Room in the south wing, with storage space for books relegated to alcoves on either side of the two-story room. Consequently, no expense was spared in its construction; more money was spent per square foot on the Indian Treaty Room than on any other room in the building.[44] It is richly ornamented with native and imported marbles, onyx, encaustic tiles, iron and bronze work and has been so well maintained over the years that today it remains very close to its original appearance as it was described in 1884:

> The library, is much more elegant than that of the State Department, and the librarian claims that it has no equal in the country. The books are hidden away in adjoining alcoves, and the main room, called the reception room. It is thirty by forty feet, with an inlaid floor of the finest English tiling. The centerpiece is very elaborate, and represents a blazing star. The walls are formed of marble panels, those of the first story being of malachite, with narrow borders of Sienna marble and a wider border of red griotte from France. The whole panel is encased in a massive iron frame richly bronzed, and separated by pilasters with Corinthian capitals. The second story is open to the roof, and guarded with a handsome bronze balustrade, ornamented with mythological figures and inlaid with circular pieces of Mexican onyx. The gas lights in the first story are in the corners and supported by handsome bronze figures representing respectively, "War and Peace," "Industry," "Goddess of Liberty," and the "Arts and Sciences." The chandelier in the upper story rests upon the prow of an Egyptian barge.[45]

The library is entered through a doorway enframed with carved nautical symbols. The original transom, now lost, was a block of green marble that, according to tradition, reportedly came from the Temple of Jupiter at Pompeii, inscribed and gilded with the word "Library."[46] Notable features in the room are the convex ceiling with its gilded stars, the ornate cast-iron grillework on the dado of the lower level, the intricate hardware of the balcony railing, and allegorical symbols of the navy and sea, including

Figure 35: The Indian Treaty Room. Formerly the Reception Room of the Navy Department's library, this room dates from 1877 and retains virtually all of its original features, including the four bronze allegorical lamps, encaustic tile floor, and wall panels of Italian and French marble. Richard Cheek for the Dunlap Society, 1976.

Figure 36: Detail of Balcony Railing, Indian Treaty Room. Surrounding the perimeter of the room, this railing contains allegorical symbols of the Navy and sea, including sea serpents, dolphins, scallop shells, and pairs of sea horses that flank medallions of Mexican onyx. White House.

dolphins, sea horses, shells, eagles, sea plants, and sea serpents that are scattered around the room (Figure 36).

The four bronze lighting fixtures in the corners, designed by Von Ezdorf, are a tour-de-force of design and manufacture and perhaps the most noted decorative features in the building, each weighing close to eight hundred pounds and cast from a plaster model supplied by the designer to the Phildelphia firm of Bureau Brothers and Heaton. Two male and two female figures rest on identical foliate bases, each supporting a tripartite fixture fastened to a backing of curved bronze plates. The "War and Peace" lamp in the northwest corner of the room is represented by a male figure wearing a headdress modeled after the United States Capitol and carrying a sword entwined with an olive branch and a shield with the Latin phrase, "SI VIS PACEM PARA BELLUM" ("If you desire peace, prepare for war") (Figure 37). "Industry" in the southwest corner is a winged female figure carrying tools (Figure 38), and "Liberty," another female figure in the northeast corner of the room, holds a symbolic torch and chain of slavery with one link broken and wears a spiked tiara modeled after that of Frederic Bartholdi's Statue of Liberty, which had only recently been designed and not yet placed in the New York harbor (Figure 39). The male figure of "Arts and Sciences" in the southeast corner carries a cartouche embellished with maps of the two hemispheres and astronomical forms (Figure 40).

Eventually library functions took over this room and its use for receptions ceased. In 1923 it was turned into file storage by the State Department and beginning in 1950 became the site for presidential news conferences. Today it is used as a conference and meeting room and, with the exception of the fabric walls that block the entrances to the book alcoves on the second floor and new ceiling lamps, fortunately remains in an exceptional state of preservation.

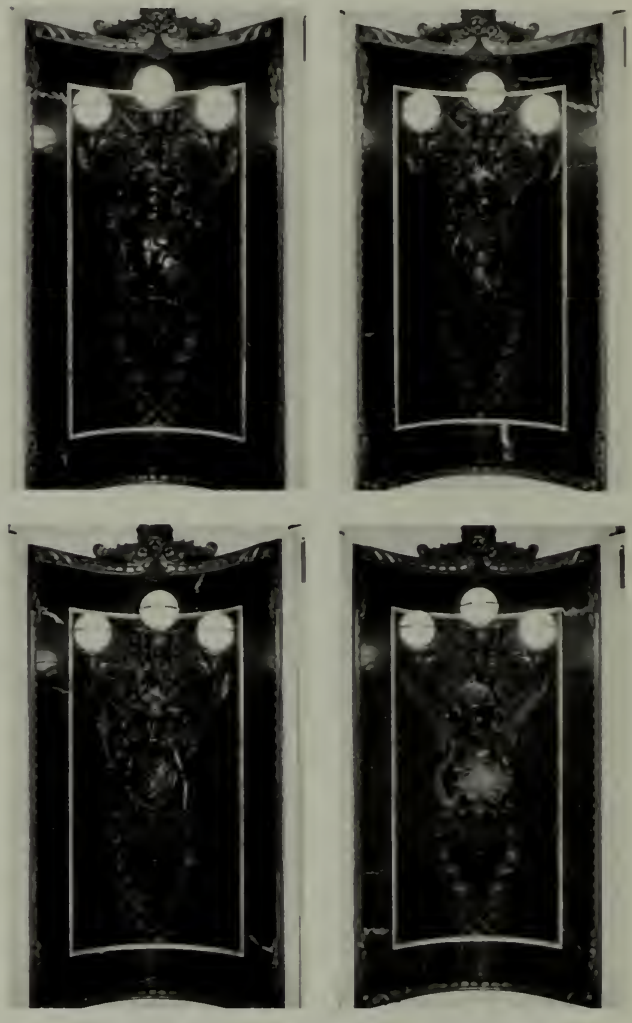


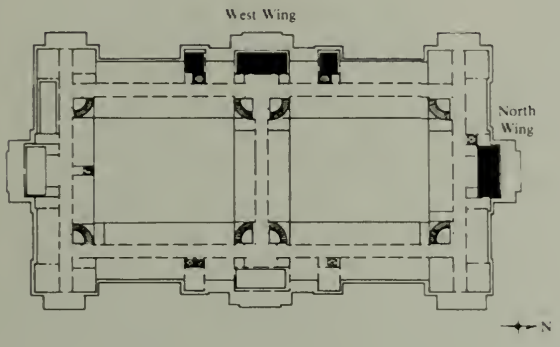
Figure 37: "War and Peace" Lamp, Indian Treaty Room. Wearing a headdress modeled after the United States Capitol Building, this winged male figure holds an olive branch symbolizing peace and a shield inscribed with a Latin phrase that translates "If you desire peace, prepare for war." White House.

Figure 38: "Industry" Lamp, Indian Treaty Room. This winged female figure carries machine tools and gear to symbolize industry. White House.

Figure 39: "Liberty" Lamp, Indian Treaty Room. Crowned by a tiara modeled after that of Bartholdi's Statue of Liberty, this classically garbed figure carries the torch of liberty and the chain of slavery with one link broken. White House.

Figure 40: "Arts and Sciences" Lamp, Indian Treaty Room. This figure carries a wreath and cartouche decorated with maps of the two hemispheres. White House.

The War Department Wings



Although the sections of the building assigned to the War Department were the last to be constructed, the department received the largest amount of space. The north wing, originally chosen for War Department offices by Secretary Belknap, was the first of the department's areas to be built and was laid out in a manner similar to the south wing, with major offices in the center pavilion and two curving staircases capped by skylit domes. As discussed earlier, differences appear in the detailing of their domes, and in the altered design of the columns and pilasters in the corridors. The one notable room in this wing is the large office located in the center of the second floor, originally used by the secretary of the department and currently occupied by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. Of special interest in the room is the extraordinary floor with its complex inlaid pattern composed of a variety of woods. Surviving drawings indicate that an ornate Moorish style library was also designed for this wing but was never built, probably because of the decision made to use the west wing as the location for the War Department's principal offices instead of the north wing as Secretary Belknap had envisioned.

The west wing contains several interiors of special interest. Its floor plan is similar to that of the east wing, although the double staircase that had proven to be such a challenge there was simplified slightly so that construction would not be delayed again. These stairs rise to a magnificent domed rotunda that unfortunately does not retain all of its original features. The plan consists of a round dome set within a square frame that is flanked by large half-domes and concave panels. In the center of the dome is a pendant from which radiates a series of narrow ribs. Von Ezdorf's original drawing shows that the dome was once filled with small pieces of colored glass arranged in geometric star and sunburst patterns and was raised above a pierced iron ring. The half domes, divided by wide cast-iron ribs, also contained bands of colored glass and were painted with what the original plans called "faint figures." At its base, the entire dome is supported by four elegant winged griffins resting on brackets draped with foliate swags (Figure 41). All of the iron ribs remain in place, but the stained glass has been removed and replaced by metal plates, and the original painted ornament has been covered.

Figure 41: Detail of Griffin, West Wing Rotunda. The principal ribs of the domes spring from these winged griffins which are absent from Von Ezdorf's drawing, but typical of his designs, nevertheless.

Richard Cheek for the Dunlap Society, 1976

FOOTNOTES

[1] Several early sources note that the OEOB was the largest office building in the world; see Charles Reynolds, Washington: A Handbook for Visitors (Washington, D.C.: Foster and Reynolds, 1899), p. 115; and Mabel Fonda Gareissen, Little Sketches and Glimpses of Our National Capital (Baltimore: Munder-Thomsen, 1907) p. 26.

[2] H. W. Crew, Centennial History of the City of Washington, D.C. (Dayton: United Brethren Publishing House, 1892), p. 676.

[3] Joseph W. Moore, Picturesque Washington (Cedar Rapids: G. W. Lyons, 1889), p. 168.

[4] William R. Ware, "Buildings in Philadelphia," American Architecture and Building News, 1 (October 14, 1876), p. 335.

[5] Glenn Brown, "Government Buildings Compared with Private Buildings," American Architecture and Building News, 44 (April 17, 1894) p. 8.

[6] Donald J. Lehman, Executive Office Building, General Services Administration Historical Study #3 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1973). This publication contains an extensive section on the early development of federal buildings in Washington (pp. 1-8). See also John W. Reps, Monumental Washington: The Planning and Development of the Capital Center (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

[7] L'Enfant was undoubtedly familiar with many Baroque town plans. According to Reps (Monumental Washington, p. 15), L'Enfant wrote to Thomas Jefferson in 1891 requesting plans of European cities. Jefferson sent L'Enfant maps of Frankfurt, Karlsruhe, Amsterdam, Strasbourg, Paris, Orleans, Bordeaux, Lyons, Montpelier, Marseilles, Turin, and Milan.

[8] Lehman, Executive Office Building, p. 5.

[9] President Jackson ordered that the Treasury be placed directly on 15th Street. Mills objected to this location since the building would destroy the visual corridor L'Enfant had planned between the Capitol and the White House, but he was overruled. The OEOB interrupts L'Enfant's vista along New York Avenue.

[10] See Lehman, Executive Office Building, pp. 11-20, for an extensive discussion of the early plans for a new executive office building west of the White House.

[11] Among those who entered the competition were Robert Mills, William Strickland, Ammi B. Young, John Notman, and Isaiah Rogers.

[12] U. S. Congress, House, Final Report upon the Construction of the State, War, and Navy Building, H. R. 337, 50th Congress, 1st Session, 1888, p. 4.

[13] 41st Congress, "Statute at Large 494," March 3, 1871.

[14] Donald J. Lehman, "Alfred B. Mullett," in Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects, edited by Barbara Chenow, Volume 3 (New York: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 249-251.

[15] David Van Zanten, "Second Empire Style Architecture in Philadelphia," Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin 74 (September, 1978), pp. 11-12.

[16] Marcus Whiffen and Frederick Koeper, American Architecture: 1860-1976, volume 2, (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1983), p. 211.

[17] The first building in America in the French Second Empire style was the Hart M. Schiff house on Fifth Avenue and 10th Street, New York City. This residence was designed in 1850 by Danish-born and Parisian-trained architect Detlef Lienau. For a study of Lienau, see Ellen Kramer, "The Domestic Architecture of Detlef Lienau, A Conservative Victorian" (Ph. D. dissertation, New York University, 1957).

[18] Diary of Hamilton Fish, 6 April 1870, Fish Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

[19] Secretary of War Belknap was persuaded to accept Mullett's plans when his request for the reassignment of the War Department to the north wing was granted.

[20] These copies, in the collection of Columbia University's Avery Library, were traced from the originals in 1880 and are labeled "true copies."

[21] Annual report in the form of a letter from Alfred B. Mullett to Hamilton Fish, 30 September 1873, p. 6. State Department Building Collection, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

[22] Letter from Hamilton Fish to the Honorable James A. Garfield, 26 January 1875, in H. R. 57, 43rd Congress, 2nd session, 1875.

[23] For information on William Potter, see Sarah Bradford Landau, Edward T. and William A. Potter: American Victorian Architects (New York: Garland, 1979).

[24] "Ledger of Construction," Department of State, June 1874. State Department Building Collection, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

[25] Annual report in the form of a letter from Alfred B. Mullett to Hamilton Fish, 9 January 1872, p. 3. State Department Building Collection, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

[26] Report on the State, War, and Navy Department Building Made to the Secretary of War for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1878 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1878), p. 8.

[27] George G. Evans, Visitor's Companion at Our Nation's Capital: A Complete Guide for Washington and Its Environs, (Philadelphia: George G. Evans, 1892), p. 87.

[28] Jane W. Gemmill, Notes on Washington (Philadelphia: E. Claxton and Co., 1884), p. 146.

[29] Moore, Picturesque Washington, p. 168.

[30] DeB. Randolph Keim, Keim's Illustrated Hand-book (Washington, D. C.: Keim, 1883), p. 127.

[31] Annual Report of the Public Building Commission for the Calendar Year 1930 (Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1931), p. 23.

[32] Washington Post, March 6, 1961, p. B1.

[33] See, for example, Henry-Russel Hitchcock, Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, 4th edition (New York: Penguin, 1977), p. 242; Marcus Whiffen and Frederick Koeper, American Architecture: 1607-1976 (Cambridge: M. I. T. Press, 1981), p. 214; and Leland Roth, A Concise History of American Architecture (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 128.

[34] "State and Society in Washington," Harper's New Monthly Magazine 56, (March, 1878) 491.

[35] Evans, Visitor's Companion, p. 90.

[36] Keim, Illustrated Hand-book, p. 128.

[37] Gemmill, Notes on Washington, p. 149.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Frances Gulick, "Executive Office Building: Miscellaneous Notes" (Washington, D. C.: Bureau of the Budget Library, 1956), p. 2.

[40] Annual Report of Construction of State, War, and Navy Building for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1879 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1879), p.5.

[41] Annual Report of Construction of State, War, and Navy Building for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1878 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1878), p. 4.

[42] Margaret A. Albee. Paint Analysis and Recommendations for Repainting: East Rotunda, Old Executive Office Building, Washington, D. C. (Boston: North Atlantic Historic Preservation Center, National Park Service, 1984), p. 6.

[43] Francis Loomis, "The Executive Office Building, Originally the State, War, and Navy Building" (Washington, D. C.: Bureau of the Budget Library, 1961), p. 14.

[44] Lehman, Executive Office Building, p. 82.

[45] Gemmill, Notes on Washington, p. 151.

[46] See, for example, Evans, Visitor's Companion, p. 92; and Gemmill, Notes on Washington, p. 151.

[47] In a letter to Secretary of War William Endicott dated 15 January 1887, Thomas Lincoln Casey specifically requested permission to employ Hatch, writing, "I have the honor to request authority to employ the personal services of Stephen D. Hatch as architect; for the purposes of making under my directions, designs for the finish of certain rooms in the west wing of this building." War Department Building Collection, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

[48] The Whitehall Building still stands, although it has been vacant for many years and was recently gutted. Among Hatch's other major extant works in New York City are the former Gilsey House (1869-1871), a hotel on Broadway and West 29th Street, the cast-iron building erected for the Appleton Publishing Company (1871) at 1-5 Bond Street, and the Neo-Flemish-style Fleming Smith Warehouse (1891-1892) at Washington and Watt Streets.

[49] "Purchase Book," volume 2. Among the colors used were raw and burnt sienna, raw and burnt umber, Vandyke brown, English Venetian red, French ochre, Prussian blue, Dutch pink, chrome yellow, and ultramarine.

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FOOTNOTES

[1] Several early sources note that the OEOB was the largest office building in the world; see Charles Reynolds, Washington: A Handbook for Visitors (Washington, D.C.: Foster and Reynolds, 1899), p. 115; and Mabel Fonda Gareissen, Little Sketches and Glimpses of Our National Capital (Baltimore: Munder-Thomsen, 1907) p. 26.

[2] H. W. Crew, Centennial History of the City of Washington, D.C. (Dayton: United Brethren Publishing House, 1892), p. 676.

[3] Joseph W. Moore, Picturesque Washington (Cedar Rapids: G. W. Lyons, 1889), p. 168.

[4] William R. Ware, "Buildings in Philadelphia," American Architecture and Building News, 1 (October 14, 1876), p. 335.

[5] Glenn Brown, "Government Buildings Compared with Private Buildings," American Architecture and Building News, 44 (April 17, 1894) p. 8.

[6] Donald J. Lehman, Executive Office Building, General Services Administration Historical Study #3 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1973). This publication contains an extensive section on the early development of federal buildings in Washington (pp. 1-8). See also John W. Reps, Monumental Washington: The Planning and Development of the Capital Center (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

[7] L'Enfant was undoubtedly familiar with many Baroque town plans. According to Reps (Monumental Washington, p. 15), L'Enfant wrote to Thomas Jefferson in 1891 requesting plans of European cities. Jefferson sent L'Enfant maps of Frankfurt, Karlsruhe, Amsterdam, Strasbourg, Paris, Orleans, Bordeaux, Lyons, Montpelier, Marseilles, Turin, and Milan.

[8] Lehman, Executive Office Building, p. 5.

[9] President Jackson ordered that the Treasury be placed directly on 15th Street. Mills objected to this location since the building would destroy the visual corridor L'Enfant had planned between the Capitol and the White House, but he was overruled. The OEOB interrupts L'Enfant's vista along New York Avenue.

[10] See Lehman, Executive Office Building, pp. 11-20, for an extensive discussion of the early plans for a new executive office building west of the White House.

[11] Among those who entered the competition were Robert Mills, William Strickland, Ammi B. Young, John Notman, and Isaiah Rogers.

[12] U. S. Congress, House, Final Report upon the Construction of the State, War, and Navy Building, H. R. 337, 50th Congress, 1st Session, 1888, p. 4.

[13] 41st Congress, "Statute at Large 494," March 3, 1871.

[14] Donald J. Lehman, "Alfred B. Mullett," in Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects, edited by Barbara Chenow, Volume 3 (New York: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 249-251.

[15] David Van Zanten, "Second Empire Style Architecture in Philadelphia," Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin 74 (September, 1978), pp. 11-12.

[16] Marcus Whiffen and Frederick Koeper, American Architecture: 1860-1976, volume 2, (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1983), p. 211.

[17] The first building in America in the French Second Empire style was the Hart M. Schiff house on Fifth Avenue and 10th Street, New York City. This residence was designed in 1850 by Danish-born and Parisian-trained architect Detlef Lienau. For a study of Lienau, see Ellen Kramer, "The Domestic Architecture of Detlef Lienau, A Conservative Victorian" (Ph. D. dissertation, New York University, 1957).

[18] Diary of Hamilton Fish, 6 April 1870, Fish Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

[19] Secretary of War Belknap was persuaded to accept Mullett's plans when his request for the reassignment of the War Department to the north wing was granted.

[20] These copies, in the collection of Columbia University's Avery Library, were traced from the originals in 1880 and are labeled "true copies."

[21] Annual report in the form of a letter from Alfred B. Mullett to Hamilton Fish, 30 September 1873, p. 6. State Department Building Collection, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

[22] Letter from Hamilton Fish to the Honorable James A. Garfield, 26 January 1875, in H. R. 57, 43rd Congress, 2nd session, 1875.

[23] For information on William Potter, see Sarah Bradford Landau, Edward T. and William A. Potter: American Victorian Architects (New York: Garland, 1979).

[24] "Ledger of Construction," Department of State, June 1874. State Department Building Collection, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

[25] Annual report in the form of a letter from Alfred B. Mullett to Hamilton Fish, 9 January 1872, p. 3. State Department Building Collection, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

[26] Report on the State, War, and Navy Department Building Made to the Secretary of War for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1878 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1878), p. 8.

[27] George G. Evans, Visitor's Companion at Our Nation's Capital: A Complete Guide for Washington and Its Environs, (Philadelphia: George G. Evans, 1892), p. 87.

[28] Jane W. Gemmill, Notes on Washington (Philadelphia: E. Claxton and Co., 1884), p. 146.

[29] Moore, Picturesque Washington, p. 168.

[30] DeB. Randolph Keim, Keim's Illustrated Hand-book (Washington, D. C.: Keim, 1883), p. 127.

[31] Annual Report of the Public Building Commission for the Calendar Year 1930 (Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1931), p. 23.

[32] Washington Post, March 6, 1961, p. B1.

[33] See, for example, Henry-Russel Hitchcock, Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, 4th edition (New York: Penguin, 1977), p. 242; Marcus Whiffen and Frederick Koeper, American Architecture: 1607-1976 (Cambridge: M. I. T. Press, 1981), p. 214; and Leland Roth, A Concise History of American Architecture (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 128.

[34] "State and Society in Washington," Harper's New Monthly Magazine 56, (March, 1878) 491.

[35] Evans, Visitor's Companion, p. 90.

[36] Keim, Illustrated Hand-book, p. 128.

[37] Gemmill, Notes on Washington, p. 149.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Frances Gulick, "Executive Office Building: Miscellaneous Notes" (Washington, D. C.: Bureau of the Budget Library, 1956), p. 2.

[40] Annual Report of Construction of State, War, and Navy Building for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1879 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1879), p.5.

[41] Annual Report of Construction of State, War, and Navy Building for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1878 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1878), p. 4.

[42] Margaret A. Albee. Paint Analysis and Recommendations for Repainting: East Rotunda, Old Executive Office Building, Washington, D. C. (Boston: North Atlantic Historic Preservation Center, National Park Service, 1984), p. 6.

[43] Francis Loomis, "The Executive Office Building, Originally the State, War, and Navy Building" (Washington, D. C.: Bureau of the Budget Library, 1961), p. 14.

[44] Lehman, Executive Office Building, p. 82.

[45] Gemmill, Notes on Washington, p. 151.

[46] See, for example, Evans, Visitor's Companion, p. 92; and Gemmill, Notes on Washington, p. 151.

[47] In a letter to Secretary of War William Endicott dated 15 January 1887, Thomas Lincoln Casey specifically requested permission to employ Hatch, writing, "I have the honor to request authority to employ the personal services of Stephen D. Hatch as architect; for the purposes of making under my directions, designs for the finish of certain rooms in the west wing of this building." War Department Building Collection, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

[48] The Whitehall Building still stands, although it has been vacant for many years and was recently gutted. Among Hatch's other major extant works in New York City are the former Gilsey House (1869-1871), a hotel on Broadway and West 29th Street, the cast-iron building erected for the Appleton Publishing Company (1871) at 1-5 Bond Street, and the Neo-Flemish-style Fleming Smith Warehouse (1891-1892) at Washington and Watt Streets.

[49] "Purchase Book," volume 2. Among the colors used were raw and burnt sienna, raw and burnt umber, Vandyke brown, English Venetian red, French ochre, Prussian blue, Dutch pink, chrome yellow, and ultramarine.

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